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ABSTRACT

This guide is intended to assist school administrators in their initial planning for meeting the needs of Vietnamese and other Indochinese refugees entering their schools. To insure that the students can participate in the activities of the school and community as rapidly as possible, teaching the English language must be given high priority, and at the same time the students' cognitive development must be monitored. The guide answers the following questions: (1) Can the school expect Indochinese children to adjust to the school without special provision? (2) How much English can we expect Vietnamese students to know when they come to the school? (3) What models exist for organizing instruction in English for speakers of another language? (4) How much time should be budgeted for the teaching of English? (5) What pitfalls should a school avoid in attempting to meet the English needs of Indochinese students? (6) Where can a school turn for help in teaching English to Vietnamese students? An annotated bibliography follows the text. (Author/TL)

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Indochinese Refugee Education Guides

#2

EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATOR SERIES: Meeting the English Language Needs of Indochinese Students

Schools receiving Vietnamese and other Indochinese refugees as students will have teaching the English language as a high priority to insure that the students can participate in the activities of the school and community as rapidly as possible. At the same time, teachers and administrators must be concerned with monitoring students' cognitive development and providing for their effective needs. The following is intended to assist school administrators in their initial planning for meeting these needs.

1. Can the school expect Indochinese children to adjust to the school without special provision?

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Recent court decisions, notably *Lau vs. Nichols*, have been clear in stating that when a student's language and cultural differences make it impossible for him to profit by instruction, the school has the responsibility to provide for his special instructional needs. The Center for Applied Linguistics, the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, and the Office of Civil Rights have recommended that the best way to meet these needs is through a program of bilingual/bicultural education.

The goal of the school should be to make Vietnamese students, as well as all other students, feel comfortable and successful at school, to become part of the school community.

What education has learned in recent years about teaching students who come from language and cultural groups very different from the school is that the most efficient way of assimilating them includes considering and making special provision for these differences. To ignore the unique

qualities a child brings to school is essentially the same thing as ignoring the child. The educational goal of academic adjustment cannot be achieved without special attention to the needs and unique characteristics of this new group -- the Vietnamese.

The answer to the question is: Vietnamese students will succeed in adjusting to the school when the school makes such success possible.

2. How much English can we expect Vietnamese students to know when they come to the school?

Information from all four resettlement camps indicates that school-age students at all levels vary widely in their ability to use English. All school children in Vietnam were required to study either French or English as a foreign language. Proficiency levels at the camps indicated, however, that the majority of refugees spoke English at the beginner or early intermediate levels. For older students who had received several years of training in English, the ability to read and write was greater than the ability to speak. Schools preparing to receive Vietnamese students should plan to test each student's ability to use the English language. A publication of the Indochinese Clearinghouse entitled Testing English Language Proficiency should provide help in language testing. The type of program planned by the school should be consistent with the finding of this testing program.

It should be noted that: too many variables were present in the resettlement camp programs for school administrators to be able to assume that since Vietnamese students studied some English there, they would be able to fit in comfortably in an English-speaking classroom. English-language ability will vary from student to student. At best the amount of English taught in the camps has been small. There is much for the school to do.

3. What models exist for organizing instruction in English for speakers of another language?

One thing is certain: the student who has limited or no command of the English language is in need of directed, structured instruction in English.

No school should assume that a non-English speaking Vietnamese child can be placed in a regular English-speaking class and can just "pick up" English on his own. Although individual learning will vary, the school can well assume that the ease and speed with which Vietnamese students learn English will depend largely on the effort the school expends in providing for their language needs. Some patterns of instruction to be considered are:

- a. A bilingual/bicultural program (BBE) is the optimum type in which staff members are able to offer instruction to students both in English and in Vietnamese. In such programs teachers extend a child's ability to use Vietnamese while developing his ability to function in English. Such programs should be considered in districts receiving large enough numbers of refugees to make it economically feasible. (After the current school year, this will, in fact, be required by Office of Civil Rights guidelines for compliance with the Lau decision.) A commitment to a full bilingual program will require the employing of bilingual personnel, acquisition of instructional materials in Vietnamese, and extensive in-service education. Sound bilingual programs are planned and operated to reflect the wishes of the community and the parents of students involved.
- b. A support bilingual education program will employ some of the better practices of bilingual education, particularly assessing and building upon what the child already knows, developing a rich understanding of his culture and language, actively transferring skills and concepts already developed in the Vietnamese school system to those used in this country's schools, using materials in the child's native language wherever possible, and using key bilingual staff members to assure that the child continues his cognitive development while he is learning the English language. A support bilingual program will require the employing of some bilingual staff members (principally aides) and the acquisition of available materials about Vietnamese culture, history, and lifestyle (preferably in the Viet-

namese language).

- c. A structured developmental English program may be conducted independently or, preferably, in conjunction with a full bilingual or support bilingual program. Developmental English instruction involves the application of second-language teaching techniques to content material derived from the regular curriculum, and conducted within the regular classroom on an individualized basis. Such instruction emphasizes learning language for use in the communication of information, and relates reinforcement activities to communicational goals. Games, peer tutoring, etc., are used as much as possible.

The optimum program would provide that each student be given special developmental English instruction by a qualified teacher who coordinates such instruction with the student's other school work.

- The school should give a significant number of the teaching staff some intensive in-service training in methods of developmental English instruction and individualized instruction so that these can be incorporated into the regular instruction of the classroom. A person trained in ESL methods may work in close conjunction with a regular classroom teacher, but unless the ESL specialist is experienced in regular classroom teaching, such a person should not work alone with students.
- d. A "pull-out" ESL program (English as a Second Language) is not recommended by the Center for Applied Linguistics, particularly at the elementary level (new OCR guidelines for Lau compliance prohibit it at the lower elementary level). It may, however, be necessary and even desirable at the upper secondary level, so long as it is closely coordinated with content instruction in the rest of the curriculum and does not lead to segregation of the students within the school.

In pull-out situations, teachers should closely coordinate English instruction with the rest of the curriculum. The goal of ESL instruction should be to assist the student to move into the regular school program as fully and as rapidly as possible.

- Well-designed bilingual and ESL programs are compatible programs. The effective bilingual program provides for the teaching of a second language along with the extension of the child's first language. Both ESL specialists and classroom teachers who teach English in bilingual education programs should have special expertise if they are to be effective. The bilingual teacher must be able to communicate with the child in his own language and to develop his full range of skills in that language. In addition, the teacher must understand, respect, and teach the native culture of the student. This includes significant modification in the curriculum to fit different cognitive styles, and close attention to the choice of appropriate materials.
- The effective ESL program should employ the practices of bilingual education which will consider the language and culture of the student, carefully building second language instruction on the system of language the child has already acquired. Although an ESL program can be conducted by a teacher who is not able to speak fluently the child's first language, the ESL teacher must know a good bit about the student's language in order to plan instruction, and the more the teacher can know, the better. Unfortunately, many people trained in ESL are familiar only with teaching foreign students at the college level, or with teaching in another country, and are not sufficiently familiar with the needs of the American classroom to be useful except as an aide, or in a team-teaching situation.

The National Institute of Education is producing descriptions of the Vietnamese language to help teachers. Titles of forthcoming bulletins on the subject are: Teaching English Pronunciation to Vietnamese; Teaching English Suffixes to Vietnamese; A Brief Look at the Vietnamese Language: Sounds & Spellings; A Brief Look at the Vietnamese Language: The Structure of Sentences.

4. How much time should be budgeted for the teaching of English?

With all the demands on the Vietnamese student's time during the school day, the teacher will have to set aside time for special instruction in English. Just how much time is required will depend on the rest of the school schedule, the language ability of the child, and the type of program decided on by the school. Certain guidelines might be helpful:

- The student will need some directed instruction every day if possible. Furthermore, several shorter sessions are better than one long one.
- The decision about what the student can afford to miss in order to receive adequate English instruction will partially depend upon the priorities of instruction the school has set and partially upon the needs of the child. If a student cannot understand enough English to follow a lesson, say in arithmetic, it would be best if he could be given the essentials of the lesson in his own language (or French, if he knows that), and spend the remaining time in individualized practice learning the key vocabulary and phrases needed to follow the instruction in English.
- In a school where several classroom teachers are partially- or well-trained in ESL instruction, that work can be coordinated with regular classwork and the student misses very little. In pull-out ESL programs, particularly

those not well coordinated with the rest of the instructional program, the student is likely to miss a great deal.

- Learning English as a second language takes considerable time, and the older the student, the more time it is likely to take. The school should not be unrealistic about expecting students to learn the language in a matter of a few weeks. Programs conducted by skilled teachers will naturally teach more language in a shorter time, but individual students will still vary in the time needed to develop certain fluency levels.

5. What pitfalls should a school avoid in attempting to meet the English needs of Indochinese students?

- Avoid the assumption that all children should be able to learn English all by themselves by just sitting in an English-speaking classroom. Though some students, particularly younger ones, seem to have great facility for learning a second language, it cannot be assumed that all children do.
- Do not assume that any teacher, regardless of training, can be successful in teaching English as a second language. Such instruction requires skill, understanding, and knowledge. Conversely, do not assume that anyone, just because they speak Vietnamese or Cambodian, can teach in those languages.
- Avoid the mistake, common in most ESL programs and materials, of emphasizing pronunciation in early stages of instruction. Learning key vocabulary and building fluency in basic communication patterns should be the first goal. Pronunciation should be secondary. For many students, listening practice should be given high priority.

- Do not assume that difficulties in pronouncing English sounds represent a pathological condition. Americans trying to pronounce Vietnamese would have many more problems.
- Avoid the assumption that "all children are basically alike". Southeast Asian cultures are radically different from American culture at often very deep levels, which are difficult to recognize. Teachers must be aware of differences and modify their teaching strategies and procedures as well as their attitudes and expectations accordingly.
- Do not assume that the purchase of instructional materials will be sufficient. Most ESL materials have been produced for older students, and even the majority of these are out-dated in terms of current language learning theory. In any event, any materials purchased will have to be adapted for the specific language and cultural background of the students. Priority should be given to providing training and specialist assistance for teachers, and wherever possible, to recruiting and providing classroom aides from the student's native language group.

6. Where can a school turn for help in teaching English to Vietnamese students?

- The National Indochinese Clearinghouse of the Center for Applied Linguistics can provide publications which can be helpful. A listing of available materials appears periodically in the NIC Alert Bulletin. The NIC can also recommend consultants or organizations which can provide technical assistance to schools on a contractual basis.
- Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), a professional organization for specialists and persons with responsibility for ESL programs, provides information through its journals and other publications. In many areas

TESOL members are making their services available to schools receiving Vietnamese students. Information about available consultants and a list of TESOL state affiliates can be secured from the National Indochinese Clearinghouse.

- Universities with ESL teacher-training programs can be sources of information and consultative help. A listing of these is available from the TESOL office, School of Languages and Linguistics, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., 20057. A wealth of literature on English as a second language, both resource and instructional material, is presently available and should be studied by school personnel planning programs for the Vietnamese.

REFERENCES

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1. DeCamp, Jennifer. ERIC Materials Relating to Vietnamese and English. Arlington, Va.: ERIC Clearinghouse on Language and Linguistics, 1975.

A 30-item bibliography of relevant books and articles available through the ERIC system.

2. Robson, Barbara and Kent Sutherland. A Selected Annotated Bibliography for Teaching English to Speakers of Vietnamese. Arlington, Va.: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1975.

A 300-item bibliography covering basic texts, audiovisual aids, literacy materials, testing materials, cross-cultural references, etc., for both children and adults.

Language Teaching Methodology

1. Finocchiaro, Mary. English as a Second Language: From Theory to Practice. New York: Regents, 1974. \$3.25. Paperback.

Newly revised practical guide to curriculum planning, lesson planning, adaptation of materials and language testing. Discusses specific techniques for teaching pronunciation, grammar, reading and writing. Appendix contains useful definitions, an extensive bibliography.

2. Rivers, Wilga M. Speaking in Many Tongues: Essays in Foreign-Language Teaching. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1972. \$5.50. Paperback.

Collection of 11 articles written between 1968 and 1972, on various aspects of foreign-language teaching. Indexed by subject for easy reference. Good, practical articles useful to the language teacher whatever his background.

3. Stevick, Earl W. Helping People Learn English. New York: Abingdon Press, 1957.

This is a small, down-to-earth, sane, sensible book which is expressly designed to acquaint the non-experienced native speaker of English with the ins and outs of teaching English as a second language. It gives general guidelines on teaching pronunciation, and an easy-to-understand introduction to the mechanics of pronunciation. The sections on teaching grammar are equally good.

4. Saville-Troike, Muriel. Foundations for Teaching English as a Second Language. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, in press. \$6.95. Paperback.

Brand-new (not available until January) discussion of the linguistic, psychological and cultural aspects of teaching English as a foreign language. Of special use to the teacher with no special training in ESL are chapters on survival skills for teachers and students, the role of ESL in bilingual education, strategies for instruction, and preparation for teaching.

Bilingual/Bicultural Education

1. Abrahams, Roger D. and Rudolph C. Troike, eds. Language and Cultural Diversity in American Education. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1972.

This anthology of essays contains among its sections: The Problem, which is concerned with the teaching of linguistically and culturally different students; Cultures in Education, emphasizing the importance of the educator in helping children of all backgrounds through a better understanding of those various cultures; Language, which presents basic information concerning language acquisition, grammar, competence and performance, dialects, and the history of the English language; Sociolinguistics, dealing with the role of language in social interaction and with the effects of bilingualism and multilingualism.

2. Mackey, William Francis. Bilingual Education in a Binational School. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1972.

A case study of the JFK School in Berlin. Of special interest is the author's often-quoted "Typology of Bilingual Education".

3. Saville, Muriel and Rudolph C. Troike. A handbook of Bilingual Education. Washington, D.C.: TESOL, 1971.

Addressed to teachers and administrators, this handbook is a practical guide for those working in bilingual programs. The authors review the history and fundamental considerations of bilingual education and consider the linguistic, psychological, sociocultural, and pedagogical problems involved. Each section contains a good bibliography.

4. Ulibarri, Horacio. "Bilingualism." In Emma Marie Birkmaier, ed., Britannica Review of Foreign Language Education, Vol. I. Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1968. 229-258

The author discusses the nature of bilingualism, the interrelationships between bilingualism and biculturalism, the problems faced by educators in handling the situation, and the implications for teachers. The relationship of bilingualism to acculturation and biculturalism is noted, as are studies concerning these areas and others, including testing and social class stratification.